

# Picturesque Lord Ribblesdale and His American Bride

"The Ancestor," So Called by King Edward, Long a Notable Figure in English Society and Sports

LORD RIBBLESDALE for some forty years past has been one of the most picturesque and popular figures in English society and in the realms of sport; almost as familiar in Paris and Madrid as in London. Under the circumstances it is difficult to understand what is meant by the cable despatches which in recording his entirely unheralded marriage to Mrs. John Astor in London declare that "little is known about him." Even those who never have been brought into personal touch with him must be well acquainted with his appearance through his masterly portrait by John S. Sargent, which is by common consent one of the chef d'œuvres of that greatest of American artists.

## The Monarch's Apt Nickname.

Edward VII, who was a close friend of Lord Ribblesdale, is credited with having suggested to Sargent at a Royal Academy banquet that he should paint "the ancestor" as a particularly fine type of the British aristocracy who in his looks and bearing seemed to blend in the most harmonious

nant, the most charming and most universally beloved of Margot Tennant's sisters. Their marriage took place in 1877.

## Gave Two Sons to England.

That is how Ribblesdale came to be the brother-in-law of ex-Premier Herbert Asquith. Lady Ribblesdale died eight years ago, and since then her husband has lost the two sons that she bore him, both giving their lives for their country. The elder, Capt. the Hon. Thomas Lister of the Tenth Hussars, fell in the Somaliland expedition in 1904, while his younger brother, Charles, an exceptionally brilliant young man of great promise, succumbed to wounds received in the fighting on the peninsula of Gallipoli. Of Ribblesdale's daughters, Laura, the most comely, is the wife of Gen. Lord Lovat, chief of the great Scottish clan Fraser, who so greatly distinguished himself in the Boer war at the head of his corps of Lovat's Scouts, recruited exclusively from among his Highlanders. With all his fine military record and his gallantry in the

that he was the most perfect lord in waiting ever imposed upon her by any Administration, Whig or Tory, Conservative or Liberal. For the lords in waiting are nominated, not by the sovereign, but by the Premier. Ribblesdale seemed to fit so thoroughly into the picture of everything at Windsor Castle that the late Queen was never tired of pronouncing him the courtier par excellence of the old school. But where he was seen to the best advantage was when as master of the royal hunt, or to put the title more correctly Master of the Royal Buckhounds, arrayed in the green coat of his office, adorned with the silver couples forming its insignia and fol-



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fashion nineteenth century modernity with all that was most courtly and gracious in the eighteenth century.

It was by reason of this rather unusual combination that King Edward had long nicknamed his friend "the ancestor" and the sobriquet must appeal to whomever gazes upon Lord Ribblesdale's portrait. For Sargent, while representing him arrayed in hunting togs, manages to convey a sort of impression that he had just stepped out of one of those ancestral portraits in the picture gallery at Glisburne Park, near Clitheroe, which has been the home of his family for more than 700 years.

"Tommy" to his intimate friends and former fellow officers of the Rifle Brigade, irreverently dubbed "dribble-squash" by his old time chum and fellow practical joker, Admiral Lord Beresford, Lord Ribblesdale was one of the most gifted and yet least serious minded of that notable coterie, "The Souls," which forty years ago played so conspicuous a role in the English great world—a coterie in which Arthur Balfour, Lord Rosebery and the Lytteltons were shining lights and to which Mrs. Asquith, then Miss Margot Tennant, and Henry White, now one of the United States delegates to the Peace Conference in Paris, belonged. It was the association of the Souls that brought Lord Ribblesdale into the company of Charlotte Ten-

nant, the most charming and most universally beloved of Margot Tennant's sisters. Their marriage took place in 1877.

boer campaign and in the great war now closed Lord Lovat is the shyest man in Parliament, and on attempting to deliver his maiden speech in the House of Lords, felt so tongue-tied when he rose to address his fellow peers for the first time that he had to resume his seat without having uttered a single word. Lord Ribblesdale's two other daughters are Lady Wilson, wife of Sir Matthew Wilson, and Diana, who lost her first husband, Capt. Percy Lyulph Wyndham of the Coldstream Guards, in the early stages of the Great War, and has since then married again.

Queen Victoria used to say of him

lowed by a couple of dozen royal huntsmen magnificently mounted like himself, he rode at the head of the procession of royal personages up the race course at Ascot on the Cup Day, which is the day par excellence of the Ascot Week.

## His Sense of Humor Keen.

What is so disconcerting and at the same time entertaining about Lord Ribblesdale is that he is a sort of living paradox. Thus, with all his dignity and courtliness, one can never be quite sure whether he is joking or serious. On one occasion when Parliament and indeed the entire nation were absorbed by a political crisis of exceptional magnitude, Ribblesdale was one of the most interested onlookers in the Peers' gallery of the House of Commons. He appeared profoundly absorbed, and many wondered what thoughts were concealed behind that inscrutable face. But it afterward developed at the Turf Club that he was busy in counting, for the sake of deciding a bet, the number of bald heads among the elected representatives of the United Kingdom. Then, again, it is difficult to reconcile his stateliness with the remembrance

that he was until ten or fifteen years ago one of the crack boxers of the House of Lords, having tied for the championship with Lord Londale. Although he adorns the Glided Chamber, he does not take it seriously. For he contends that when it dissents from the decisions of the lower house it is mischievous, and that when it agrees with the Commons it is manifestly superfluous. "Fifty per cent, then of our time we wriggle on one horn and 50 per cent, of it on the other." And again, speaking of the lords spiritual, that is to say, the prelates who occupy seats in the House of Lords, he declares that "the rustle of lawn sleeves on their benches soon after 7:15 in the evening always constitutes a warning to the lay Peers that the time has arrived to think of other things—namely, dinner"—and is accepted as a vote of adjournment. "Eminent church dignitaries," adds Ribblesdale, "seem to me to have striking faces; whether cause or effect, these faces go with preference."

Ribblesdale is fond of flowers and he declares that it was the wisteria in full bloom covering the stables of the

Royal Hunt at Cumberland Lodge, in Windsor Park, that led him to accept the office of Master of the Royal Buckhounds. Also he has been known to quote Wordsworth with the lines:

And then my heart with pleasure fills  
And dances with the daffodils.

In order to express his satisfaction over a particularly good run with the hounds.

Lord Ribblesdale always has looked upon politics rather as a joke. He professes Liberalism and even Radicalism; he lent Glisburne Park for a Socialist meeting on the ground that it was wise to allow Socialists to blow off their steam, and that anyhow they had some useful ideas. Prior to the war he undertook the defence in the House of Lords of the budget of Lloyd George, then Chancellor of the Exchequer. He afterward spoiled the whole effect of that defence by alluding to the Chancellor—now the Prime Minister—as "half pantaloon and half highwayman." He professes to have been converted to home rule by Charles Stewart Parnell. In 1887 the two men, perfect strangers to one another, happened to travel in the same railroad

compartment from London to Holyhead en route to Dublin, and before Holyhead was reached the ordinarily impenetrable Irish statesman had been cleverly inveigled into unbosoming himself about a number of interesting measures and remarks relating to home rule which appeared three days later in print. Parnell never denied the interview or its accuracy, merely insisting, with a twinkle in his eye, that it had been obtained "under false pretences."

## Glisburne Park's Beauties.

As Lady Ribblesdale the former Mrs. John Jacob Astor will find herself the mistress of an exceptionally beautiful old country seat at Glisburne Park. It stands at the meeting of the rivers Ribble and Stockbeck,

to be wholly independent and indifferent to whatever monetary resources she may possess. There is no disparity of age to speak of, since she is 50 and he 65, both of them remarkably well preserved. With that sound sense which has always distinguished her she has escaped the danger that has beset her path for many years and by which so many women no longer in the first blush of youth have been overtaken; namely, that of marrying a man very much younger than herself. She has contented herself with a suitor who, while belonging to the lowest rank of the peerage, is the chieftain of a family that has been in uninterrupted possession of its lands in Yorkshire for over 700 years. Indeed, there are none more blue-blooded in England than the Listers.

## The Astors' Affiliations.

Mrs. John Astor's marriage to Lord Ribblesdale serves to call attention to the extent to which the Astors have become affiliated with houses of the European aristocracy. They came more than a hundred years ago from

Douglas Haig. The old Dutch house of De Stuers, which took a notable part in the Napoleonic wars at the beginning of the nineteenth century, has two of its members, John and Hubert de Stuers, the one an officer of the Dutch army, the other an aviator of the French army, who can claim descent from the original John Jacob Astor and who enjoy to this day a portion of his wealth. For their mother was Margaret Carey of New York, whose mother in turn, born as Marie Alida Astor, was a granddaughter of the founder of the Astor family. The father of the young De Stuers, that is to say the first husband of Margaret Carey, died only the other day in Paris as Minister Plenipotentiary of the Netherlands to France and as the Nestor of the foreign diplomatic corps on the banks of the Seine. Their only sister, a great-great-grandchild of the original John Jacob Astor, is the wife of Count Alfred Oberndorff, now one of the principal representatives of Germany to-day at Versailles, formerly the Kaiser's Minister Plenipotentiary in Norway and in Bulgaria. The De Stuers are by no means the



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Europe, where their origin, despite all that has been alleged to the contrary, was of the most humble character. It is to the United States that they owe their fortune, founded on this side of the Atlantic by the first of their family to emigrate to America. They came here as peasants in the eighteenth century. The twentieth century finds them endowed with an unrivalled social position and immense wealth in the land of their adoption and intermarrying on a footing of perfect equality with some of the oldest houses of the European aristocracy.

Quite recently we have had from here Capt. John Jacob Astor, a gallant veteran of the great war, in which he lost a leg and was otherwise badly wounded as a Captain of English cavalry, and who is married to the former Lady Violet Elliot, daughter of the late Earl of Minto, who was in turn Governor-General of Canada and Viceroy of India. She has some children by her first husband, who was killed in the war and who was the younger son of the Marquis of Lansdowne. Capt. Astor's father, the former William Waldorf Astor, one time a New York city Assemblyman at Albany and afterward American envoy at Rome, now occupies a seat in the House of Lords as a Viscount of the United Kingdom, in which honor he will be succeeded by his eldest son, Col. Waldorf Astor, member of the House of Commons for Plymouth at Alderbury in the confidence and regard of Prime Minister Lloyd George.

## Related to the Haigs.

One of the new Lady Ribblesdale's sisters-in-law, Augusta Astor, is the widow of George Ogilvie Haig of the Scotch family which now has been rendered historic by Field Marshal Sir

only members of the Netherlands aristocracy who can claim descent from the Astors and who have Astor blood in their veins. There are also the Van Boreels, now headed by Sir Jacob Van Boreel, who besides being Chamberlain to Queen Wilhelmina of Holland and Burgomaster of the Dutch city of Haarlem also is the tenth holder of a baronetcy bestowed upon his ancestor, Sir William Van Boreel, by King James I. when he was acting as Ambassador of Holland to the Court of St. James's. In fact before his death in 1648 Sir William Boreel, who had shown great kindness and hospitality to Charles II. during the latter's exile in Holland, received from him a peerage of the British realm, but for some reason or other the patent was never completed and therefore lapsed. The connection between the house of Astor and that of Van Boreel, which can trace its lineage back in an unbroken male line to the fourteenth century, at Ghent, was brought about through the marriage of Sarah Astor Langdon of New York, a granddaughter of the original John Jacob Astor, to Jonathan Francis Robert Van Boreel, Grand Master of the Ceremonies to King William II. of the Netherlands, his bride becoming a Dame du Palais of the Queen.

Their son, William Walter Astor Van Boreel, was Chamberlain to William III. of the Netherlands and his grandson, Francis William Robert Van Boreel, the great-great-grandson of the original John Jacob Astor, is next heir to the chieftainship of the house of Van Boreel, to its entailed property in the Netherlands, and to the British baronetcy dating from the reign of King James I. of England, who was also James VI. of Scotland.

LORD RIBBLESDALE

M. Hyman  
after painting by  
J. S. Sargent & Co.